



UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

BARBARA A. MIKULSKI
MARYLAND

October 20, 2011

Ms. Emily Harmam
Associate Director, NAVAIR Office of Small Business Programs
Patuxent River, Maryland 20670

Dear Ms. Harman & Friends:

Greetings to all the participants in the NAVAIR Small Business Roundtable at the Pax River Naval Air Station for this quarterly membership meeting focusing on the SBA's Women-Owned Set Aside Program. Thank you for the kind invitation to share this informative event with all of the talented and capable women business owners in Southern Maryland. I applaud the hard work of the Small Business Roundtable to leverage the business opportunities of this world class military facility to create businesses and much needed jobs in Southern Maryland.

Friends, I'm no stranger to the challenges of owning and operating a small business. My grandparents owned a local bakery and my parents owned a small grocery store. I saw the struggle to meet a payroll, to operate in a slim profit margin and to grow. But I also saw satisfaction from serving the community, lending a helping hand providing a service.

In fact, we can't fix the economy without small businesses, which create HALF of all the private sector jobs. Small businesses create high-tech, high-paying jobs, employing 40% of high-tech workers including scientists, engineers and IT pros. Almost a third of small businesses in this country are owned by women, with 170,000 in Maryland alone. One of the ways to help small business is targeted tax breaks and expanding access to credit. That's why I've voted to provide \$12B in tax breaks for small businesses that create jobs and end them for big businesses that send jobs overseas as well as to create a \$30B lending pool to increase access to credit for small businesses.

Did you know that despite the fact that women own a third of all small businesses, they only receive 3.3 % of federal contracts? So I voted to require that 5% of federal contracts go to women-owned small businesses and to establish a procurement program for women-owned small businesses to compete for federal contracts. It took a long time to get here, but SBA has finally begun implementing this law and directing agencies to set aside specific contracts for certified women-owned small businesses in underrepresented industries such as technology, manufacturing and construction. Federal contracts provide opportunities to expand and create good-paying jobs. If we are serious about growing the economy, then we must level the playing field for women-owned businesses.

Friends, I can't guarantee your success, but we can remove obstacles in your way, level the playing field to get contracts, expand access to capital and reduce burdensome reporting requirements. But we all agree that an investment in women-owned businesses, in all of you, is an investment in our economy. You are spurring innovation and job creation at a rate unimaginable only a generation ago. You've got the vision, grit and determination to get our economy back on track and ensure a steady supply of jobs right here in Southern Maryland. And I've got the tenacity to lead Team Maryland to make sure you have the tools to succeed. You go, Girls!

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator